

## Press Release

21 August 2007

MPHDS 01

### **The results are out on smoking!**

As teens wait anxiously for their GCSE results this week, many of the approximately one hundred thousand 16 year old smokers may be turning to cigarettes for relief as the pressure mounts. This Thursday will mark the end of two years of studying for thousands of students, and as many embark on further studies they will also have to leave cigarettes behind. From 1st October it will be illegal to sell tobacco to under 18's (up from 16).

Reaching for a cigarette when stressed is actually the worst thing a nervous student can do - research has shown that lighting up when under pressure actually increases stress levels. Nicotine wears off quickly and the withdrawal symptoms can make people tense. All smoking actually does is calm nicotine cravings, the very symptom that smoking causes.

Currently, 26 percent of 16-19 year olds smoke and half of all teenagers who smoke will die from diseases caused by tobacco if they continue to smoke throughout the course of their life. It is hoped that changing the age of sale of tobacco will make it harder for under 18's to become addicted to tobacco and therefore reduce the numbers of tobacco users who unnecessarily cut short their lives through tobacco related illnesses. Reducing the minimum age at which teenagers can be sold tobacco products will also reduce the general availability of cigarettes, and could therefore discourage young people from taking up smoking in the first place.

Help is at hand locally for teenagers wanting to quit, with Manchester Primary Care Trust (PCT) providing a range of options through the Stop Smoking Service. Richard Holford, Senior Public Health Development Advisor – Tobacco Control and Young People said, “even if teenagers have tried to stop smoking before the service can provide practical

assistance and support that can make all the difference and it's free and confidential. We offer vouchers that can be exchanged for free/reduced cost nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), such as patches or gum."

For more information call the Manchester Stop Smoking Service on 0161 205 5998, or text the word "smoke" plus your name to 81025. Visit the website at:

[www.stopsmokingmanchester.co.uk](http://www.stopsmokingmanchester.co.uk).

– Ends –

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#### Notes to editors

- Manchester Stop Smoking Service provides specialist support from trained professionals, to help the people of Manchester to quit smoking or prevent them from starting. The service is available for people of any age living or working in Manchester.
- Girls are more likely to have ever smoked than boys, a pattern which has been evident since 1993. In 2005, 42% of girls had ever smoked compared with 37% of boys  
*Statistics on Smoking – England 2006, The Information Centre.*
- Pupils were asked, *What do you think are the main reasons for people of your age starting to smoke?* The five most common reasons given, in percentages, were:

<b>Boys</b>			<b>Girls</b>		
1	'To look hard/cool'	75	1	'To look hard/cool'	80
2	'To look grown up'	57	2	'To look grown up'	64
3	'To be like friends'	49	3	'To be like friends'	62
4	'Because family do'	41	4	'Because family do'	47
5	'To enjoy the taste/effects'	27	5	'To enjoy the taste/effects'	24

The pupil samples were taken from 30 primary schools and 10 high schools from across Manchester.

*Secondary Survey Report – May 2006 Schools Health Education Unit*

- 77% (37%) of all smokers (by Question 28) would like to give up smoking. Percentage of smokers answering they would like to give up smoking.

	Mancs 2006 Secondary		Mancs 2006 Primary	
	Yr 8	Yr 10	Yr 5	Yr 6
Boys	75	78	0	67
Girls	82	74	33	29

*Secondary Survey Report – May 2006 Schools Health Education Unit*